



**PRESS RELEASE**

من الشعب الياباني  
From the People of Japan

## **Japan pledges over USD 2 million to UN-Habitat to rehabilitate structurally unsound buildings in neighbourhoods affected by the Beirut blast**

**Beirut, 29 March 2021.** Over seven months have passed since the Beirut blast and many buildings, public spaces and infrastructure remain in need of structural repair. UN-Habitat, through funding of over USD 2 million from the Government of Japan, will help improve already deteriorated living conditions of vulnerable population groups living in Beirut's Gemmayzeh, Mar Mikhael and Karantina neighbourhoods starting 31 March 2021 for one year. The project will rehabilitate 10 multi-story buildings, public spaces, and community infrastructure severely damaged by the Beirut blast.

"The Japanese contribution is in line with my vision of the situation from day one of the crisis response. It helps enable residents to remain in their neighbourhoods and maintain the cultural profile of Beirut city. Thus, I welcome all similar contributions that serve Beirut's residents," said Marwan Abboud, Governor of Beirut.

This project will build upon UN-Habitat's supporting role in carrying out immediate building-level damage assessments for [Beirut](#) and [Bourj Hammoud](#), together with the Municipality of Beirut and other actors, immediately after the Beirut blast. These assessments form the basis of selection of buildings, some of which are heritage buildings, and public spaces to be rehabilitated by the project, while taking into consideration the socio-economic vulnerability of the expected beneficiaries.

"The restoration of the city's heritage after the Beirut blast will make a huge difference to our community. Together, united, we can inspire hope and create a better tomorrow for Beirut – strengthening and restoring the city after the blast. Your generosity and dedications means a lot to us," said Jamal Itani, Mayor of Beirut.

While the worsening socio-economic situation in Lebanon continues to deepen, this project will also help mitigate the effects of the crisis by providing community members with cash-for-work after they have acquired the necessary construction and rehabilitation skills through tailored vocational training sessions. Youth groups of vulnerable Lebanese, and Syrian refugees will be engaged and employed for the project's construction and rehabilitation activities, aimed at supporting the revitalization of the local economy and enhancing the community's sense of ownership.

"I am extremely happy to share the news with the Lebanese people that we have launched the important project in partnership with UN-Habitat for reconstruction and recovery from the

destructions caused by the Beirut Harbour blast, embodying our deepest sympathy with those Lebanese friends and partners who were severely affected by the tragic event. There is no better time than now to deliver speedy services to the people in pains and sufferings as the socio-economic situation is rapidly deteriorating in the country after the blast. Japan is strongly committed to extending its helping hand to those people in dire situation as a friend in need,” said H.E. Mr. Okubo Takeshi, Ambassador of Japan to Lebanon.

This partnership is part of a series of initiatives launched or supported by UN-Habitat following the Beirut blast. Through adopting a “Build Back Better” approach, UN-Habitat reiterates its commitment to support those affected by the blast and beyond, within the wider response of the humanitarian and development community, and as part of the concerted and coordinated efforts of the United Nations family in Lebanon.

“As the emergency humanitarian response to the Beirut blast has ended, this project is crucial in supporting the city’s holistic recovery through rebuilding buildings and infrastructure that forms the character of some of Beirut’s most heritage-rich neighbourhoods,” said Taina Christiansen, Head of the UN-Habitat Lebanon Country Programme.

#### **About the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)**

UN-Habitat works in over 90 countries supporting people in cities and human settlements for a better urban future. Working with governments and local partners, its high impact projects combine world-class expertise and local knowledge to deliver timely and targeted solutions. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a dedicated Goal on cities, SDG 11 – to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

#### **For media enquiries:**

Lubna Elmahdy

UN-Habitat Lebanon

T: +961 1 985 484

M: +961 76 615 373

E: [lubna.elmahdy1@un.org](mailto:lubna.elmahdy1@un.org)